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1808.

A briefe exhortation to all men to set ye houses in Order by Wm Jones B.D. no date

A pithie & short treatise by way of dialogue whereby a godly christian is directed how to make his last will & testament by Wm Jones ——— 1612.

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A BRIEFE EXHORTATION TO ALL men to set their houses in order.

By WILLIAM IONES B. of D. Preacher to the Isle of Wight.

1 Cor. 14. 40.
Let all things be done decently, & in order.

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To the Christian Reader.

WHEN thou readeſt this ſmall Treatiſe, take thy pen and blot out what is ſuperfluous, and amend what is amiſſe, & ſupply what wants: And if any thing be iudged profitable, forthwith begin to put it in practiſe thy ſelfe, and to perſwade others to doe the like. So ſhall we all have better families, and the King better ſubiects, and God better ſervants.

Thine in the Lord Ieſus,

W. J.

To the Christian Reader.

A BRIEFE EXHORTATION to all men to set their houses in order.

ISAY, 38. 1.

Set thine house in order.

VSing with my selfe what might be the cause of so many evills and calamities as have violently assaulted our Land within

these few yeares, I could impute all to nothing more than to the great disorder that is in all orders from the highest, to the lowest: And inquiring further how such disorder might haply arise, notwithstanding we have many good orders daily established by the care of our Superiors, both in the Church and Common-wealth, for all estates and Degrees; I perceived the occasion of all mischeife to be the want of good Houshold Government.

Wherefore I resolved with all my might to presse the Doctrine of Houshold Government upon the consciences of all that shall heare or reade this short meditation

I have chosen for the ground of all that I shall say, those words, *Isay* 38. 1. *Set thine house in order.*

These are the words of the Lord of heaven and earth, which he commanded *Isaiah* the Prophet to speake unto *Ezechiah* the King.

This

This King was a great and mighty Prince, and abounded with wealth, as you may see at large, 2 *Chron.* 32. 27. And therefore there is no man so great, but may vouchsafe to hearken unto that which is said unto him. This *Ezechiah* was as good as great: For 2 *Kings* 18. 3. *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, so that after him was none like him of all the Kings of Iudah, nor any that were before him.* And therefore who is so good and well-ordered, that may not vouchsafe to hearken unto these words? Wherefore I beseech you all to whom these words shall come, hearken with reverence and good conscience unto the same. *Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order.* Thus they are read in our last Translations; and in the margent here and elsewhere, 'tis noted that the Hebrew phrase is, *Give charge concerning thy house*: this comes all to one reckoning. For when God saith, *Gen.* 18. 19. that *Abraham will*

command his children and his houſhold after him, it is, *that they keepe the way of the Lord, and doe juſtice and judgment*. And this is to ſet his houſe in order. Some Interpreters, both here and 2 *King*. 20. take theſe words to be a Direction to the King, to make his laſt will and teſtament. But conſidering that 'tis evident, that when the Patriarches made their laſt wills, they did not onely diſpoſe of their goods, but alſo gave charge concerning the well ordering of their houſes after them, this need not interrupt us.

For my part, at this time I will follow the generall meaning of the words, as they are tranſlated, and doe my beſt endeavour, 1. To ſhew the neceſſity of ſetting every mans houſe in order.

2. I will declare the beſt way how our houſes may be ſet in order.

3. I will conclude with exhortation.

Touching the firſt. That it is neceſſary that every houſe be ſet in order,

1. Because, else the Cõmon-wealth cannot be well ordered. For the Common-wealth consists of severall houses, and if the severall houses which are so many members, be not well ruled, how can the whole body be well ordered?

The body of a Common-wealth may not unfitly be compared to the body of a great Army. Now concerning an Army, it consists of many Regiments, and every Regiment, of sundry Companies, which have their severall Captaines to traine them and teach them due order: And if these private Captaines doe not teach their severall bands due order, 'tis not possible on a sudden to cast the whole Army into a great orderly body: Even so in the Common-wealth, if every Master of a family, (who is as it were a Captaine of a company of souldiers in the Church Militant, doe not well order the severall persons committed to his charge, how can they observe order

when they are called out to ſerve publickely in the Church or Common-wealth? A few bands in an Army diſranked, may trouble, nay confound the whole Army: Even ſo a few diſorderly families may bring much hurt upon the whole Common-wealth.

Wherefore as we tender the good of the whole Land, let us every one in his place be carefull to order thoſe that are committed to our charge in our particular families.

Againe, the neceſſity of ſetting in order our ſeverall families will appeare, if we obſerve how diligent the men of God, I meane the Patriarks, Prophets, and Apoſtles, yea and the Kings of *Iſrael* and *Iudah* have beene to ſet in order their owne houſes.

Concerning *Abraham*, the Lord himſelfe ſayes, *Gen.* 18. 19. *I know him, that he will command his children and his houſhold to keepe the way of the Lord.* *Pererius* gives this note, that by this it ſeemes to

have

have bin the godly practise of the Fathers, to Catechise and instruct their families; and that this is a worthy peece of service performed unto the Lord, may appeare, because God alledgeth this as one reason why he reveales the destruction of *Sodome* unto *Abraham*, and a motive to bring upon *Abraham* that which he had spoken of him before.

The like course in ordering their families it seemes *Isaac* the sonne, and *Iacob* the Grandchild tooke: For though *Isaac* had a reprobate sonne *Esau*; and *Iacob* divers lewd sonnes; yet it was not for want of instruction. For whence did *Ioseph* (who was sold into *Egypt* when he was young) learne his religious conversation, but in the family of his father *Iacob*.

But to passe by uncertainties, and to hold me to that which is certaine. *Iosh.* 24. 15. *Ioshua* makes this protestation, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* Here you see this great man *Ioshua*

Iosua promiseth not onely for himselfe, but also for his house. And doe you thinke he did more than he needed to doe? Doubtlesse he was of another minde than *Cain*, who said *Am I my Brothers keeper?* He knew and acknowledged it was his duty to looke to the well ordering of his whole family, though they were many in number.

From *Iosua* I descend to *David*, whose behaviour touching the well ordering of his house, ye may see, *Psal.* 101. 2. There he professeth to God, that he will behave himselfe wisely. *I will walke within my house with a perfect heart*, saith he. *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithfull of the Land, that they may dwell with me. He that walketh in a perfect way shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house. He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will destroy all the wicked of the Land, that I may cast off all wicked doers from the City of the Lord.* Here it is remarkeable, that *Da-*

vid

vid the King, intending the reformation of his Kingdome, begins first with his owne family, because he well knew, except order be kept in private families, there can be no good order in the Common-wealth.

To *Iosua* and *David* we may adde *Cornelius*, who as ye may see *Acts* 10. was very carefull to keepe his servants in order.

Now behold that which *Abraham*, *Iosua*, *David*, and *Cornelius* did, is recorded for our instruction; Every commended ensample in Scripture is propounded for the instruction of all that heare the same. Take we therefore from hence speciall notice, that it is our duty to set our severall houses in order.

Will you say unto me, these foure were great Commanders, and had authority in their hands to compell the refractary, but we which are private men, for want of authority, can never hope to compasse this maine [illegible]

I answer; The Scripture affords examples of private men and women which have well ordered their families. Among these I give preheminence to *Ionadab* the sonne of *Rechab*, who so well ordered his family, that after his death a long time it remained an excellent order. And therefore the Lord himselfe propounds that family as a patterne to all the people of *Israell*, and gives a blessing to the same, *Ierem.* 35.

In the second place I note *Aquila* and *Priscilla* his wife, whom, being but craftsmen, S. *Paul* commends very highly, not onely for instructing their owne families, but also for directing their neighbours, *Rom*, 16.

In the third place come to *Timothies* Grandmother *Lois*, and his Mother *Eunice*, who as S. *Paul* records, 2 *Tim.* 1. 5. were so carefull in ordering young *Timothie*, that when he was a very young man, he was admitted to be the great Apostles Companion *Acts* 16. 1. Nei-

ther may we thinke that these godly women bestowed all their paines upon one *Timothy*, but upon the rest of their family.

In the fourth place, I name the Elect Lady to whom S. *Iohn* dedicates his second Epistle; and the beloved *Gaius* to whom he writes his third Epistle: Together with *Nymphas*, *Col.* 4. 15. and *Philemon v.* 2. who had as it were Churches in their private families. as the Scripture saith. The meaning is, they so well ordered their families, that they might rightly be called little Churches or holy Congregations, It is the Note of learned *Zanchius* upon *Col.* 4 concerning *Nymphas* his house: There is said to be a Church in his house, saith he; because, *Erat tota familia bene & Christianè instituta, sicut solent esse Ecclesiæ, Quia ibi legebatur verbum Dei, coarguebantur peccata, ad pœnitentiam excitabantur singuli, fiducia in Christum afflictis conscientijs inculcabatur, adhibe-*

bantur consolationes, ad studium sanctæ vitæ incitabantur, preces habebantur, canebantur Psalmi, &c. That is, the whole family was well and Christianly ordered, as Churches use to be: Because there the word of God was read, sinne was reproved, all were exhorted to repent, they which were afflicted in minde were counselled to be confident of Gods mercy in Christ, all were stirred up to holinesse of life, prayers were used, and Psalmes were sung, &c.

By these examples which I have propounded out of Gods word ye may easily see, that heretofore all beleevers were carefull to order their owne families, though they were never so meane: and hereupon it came to passe, that the Church of God, the number of beleevers did so mightily increase in those primative times: And verily the reason why iniquity doth so abound in these dayes is, because Governours of families doe as it were cast the reignes in the

necke of those that are committed to their charge, and even suffer them to doe what they will in regard of religion without controlment. For who can bring a wel-governed Common-wealth out of a rabble of disordered families?

Wherefore, if the examples of the Patriarchs and men after Gods owne heart be able to prevaile with us any thing, let the same minde be in every one of us which was in them: Let us all with one accord bend our selves to set our severall families in order.

Thus much for the second reason inforcing the well ordering of private families, namely, the example of holy men from the beginning.

The third reason is the commandement of God, not onely in my Text, but also in other places: If there were but this one commandement in all the Scripture, were it not sufficient? But behold divers others tending to the same purpose: *Deut.* 6. 6. &c.

commandement is given to every Maſter of a family; *The words that I command thee this day ſhall be in thy heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and ſhalt talke of them when thou ſitteſt in thy houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt downe, and when thou riſeſt up.* What is here enjoyned but the well ordering of all families according to Gods word? Firſt, the Maſter of the family muſt hide Gods words in his heart, but not as the ſloathfull ſervant that hid his talent in a napkin, but he muſt lay them up there, that he may have them in a readineſſe to teach and inſtruct his wife, children, ſervants, and neighbours; and he muſt ſo whet Gods words upon them, that they may underſtand them, and keepe them, and doe them.

The practiſe of *Abraham* mentioned by God himſelfe, *Gen* 18.19. may ſerve to explaine this place. And doth not *Salomon* tell us, *Prov.* 4. 4. that *when he*

was tender, his father taught him and said unto him, Let thine heart retaine my words, keepe my commandements and live, &c.

And that it was an usuall custome among Gods people to instruct their families according to the forenamed commandement, appeares *Prov.* 31. where King *Lemuel* sets downe the Prophecie that his mother taught him, that is, the holy and wholesome Doctrine which she instilled into him concerning the well ordering of his conversation. Let these therefore be examples and motives to all Christians, by godly instruction to order their families; yea seeing S. *Paul*, which was the Apostle of the Gentiles, and spake by inspiration, saies, *Rom.* 15. 4. *Whatsoever things are written aforetime, are written for our instruction*; Let us beleeve that the Lord saith unto every one of us as well as he did to King *Ezechiah*, *Set thine house in order.*

This being so, what can be

ceſſary than to inquire in the next place, how and after what manner a familie may be well ordered?

Now, without all queſtion, the beſt Rule whereby to order a family is the word of the onely wiſe God, which is contained in the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament. Hereby have holy men in all ages ordered their houſes: Wherefore let us alſo take direction from the word of God how we may well order our ſeverall families.

Now if yee ſearch the Scriptures, yee ſhall finde that to the well ordering of a family two duties are required:

The firſt concernes God:

The ſecond our ſelves which are members.

The duty which we owe to God, even in our private houſes, in plaine termes, is holy worſhip and godly ſervice 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. S. *Paul*, who was ſent by Chriſt to be the Apoſtle of the Gentiles, ſaith, *I will that men pray every*

where, lifting up holy hands. If every where, then in the family as well as in the Church: And under invocation is comprehended all holy worship and service.

Againe, *Iosua* saith when he doubted what the rest of the *Israelites* would doe, *I and my house will serve the Lord: Iosh.* 24. 15. Here is intimated not onely publike, but also private worship and service.

Besides, we all desire the blessing of the Lord as well in our private families as abroad, and therefore 'tis requisite that we serve God as well at home as abroad. For the blessing of the Lord is promised onely to those that serve him. *Godlinesse,* saith S. *Paul.* 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. *hath the promise of the life that now is, and the life to come.* Now that is true godlinesse, when a man is addicted to serve God at all times, in all places, as well privately as publikely.

But what is this holy service which

we are commanded to performe in our families?

Answ. It stands in Institution, Invocation, and Discipline.

1. Houshold Institution is a plaine and familiar kinde of instruction, which the Governour of the familie useth for the building up of all the members of the familie in the truth which is according to godlinesse.

The meanes hereof are either daily, or such as concerne the publike Ministery.

The daily meanes are either the continuall use of Gods word, or the observation and application of the workes of God.

The continuall use of Gods word requisite in private houses is this; That the Master of the family daily reade, or cause to be read some part of Gods word, and for those things which are plaine, or which he hath learned by the publike Ministery or Orthodox Expo-

sitours, that he whet them upon his family, and urge them by way of catechising to meditation and practise. This is plaine by that forecited text, *Deut.* 6. 6. 7. *&c.*

The application of Gods workes is, when the Master calls his house to the daily observation of al Gods workes whether of mercy or judgment; that thereby he may beget in their hearts godly feare, humility, patience, thankfullnesse, contentment, confidence for the time to come, and all such other graces as the due consideration of Gods workes will bring forth.

The meanes of Institution which concerne the publike Ministery are,

1. That the Master prepare his family by prayer and admonition, and take such order that they may all resort unto the publike assembly in due time, and there behave themselves as becommeth Christians.

2. That when they returne he ex-

mine them concerning the points delivered, and helpe them forward in the meditation of the Word and Sacraments.

Neither is it sufficient cursorily or superficially to doe all this, but it must be done by way of authority, and with great reverence and conscience.

And therefore they are in a wretched estate that take upon them to be Governours of families, and yet never offer to speake one word of instruction to their household, nor take order that others may. Ignorance in this case will not excuse. Besides, if every Master would daily use in his family the Church Catechisme, wherein are contained all the fundamentall points of religion, he would greatly profit both himselfe and his family, and hinder much idlenesse and wickednesse.

The second thing wherein household service stands, is daily invocation of the name of God in prayer and thanksgive-

The Scripture calls us to *pray continually, and in all things to give thanks*, 1 *Thes.* 5. 17. 18. And if we looke into the practise of holy men, we shall finde that it was usuall with them to pray in their houses two or three times a day. *David* saith *Psal.* 55. 18. *Evening and morning, and at noone will I pray.* And of *Daniell* 'tis said, *That he prayed and gave thankes three times a day before his God*, *Dan.* 6. And of *Iob* 'tis recorded, that he *offered up burnt offerings continually for his children*, *Iob.* 1. 5.

Now what better patternes can Masters of families propound unto themselves than *David*, *Iob*, and *Daniell*? Wherefore as they have done and have beene praised throughout all generations; so let every Master of an house take order that it may be done in his family. In the morning when we have beene kept in the darke and dangerous night: And when we are to goe forth to our labour, what more fit than to

forth in the name of the Lord? Thou desirest that the Lord would blesse thy businesse in the hands of thy servants, therefore let them joyne with thee in prayer. This family-prayer ought to be made early in the morning, when all the family which are in health ought to arise after the example of Christ Iesus.

I have often thought of that saying of S. *Augustine, Indecens est Christiano ut cum radius solis inveniat in lecto*: that is, It is unbeseeming a Christian that the Sunne rising should finde him in bed. This long lying in bed is that which hinders many Masters that they cannot pray with their families.

Another set time of prayer ought to be the evening, when the family returne from their labour, and are going to sleepe, which is the elder sister of death: then is a fit time to praise God for all the benefits of the day, and to pray for protection in the night. Many have gone well to their beds, and beene

found dead in the morning: therefore me thinkes none should be so presumptuous as to goe to sleepe without calling upon the Lord, and pouring out his soule before him.

Besides morning and evening, there be other times for prayer and praise every day; namely, as often as we betake our selves to eate and drinke. 1 *Tim.* 4. 4. *Every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word and prayer.* Whosoever therefore shall enter upon any of Gods creatures without prayer and thanksgiving, hath not the creatures sanctified unto him.

I wonder then that some should be so profane and impudent as to scoffe at those that solemnly praise God at meales, and pray for a blessing, especially if their Grace be a little longer than ordinary. Doubtlesse this is an evident token of graceless men. Neither is it any marvell though many use God

creatures to surfetting and drunkennesse when they make no conscience to have them sanctified by prayer.

With ordinary prayer in the family, we must sometimes joyne singing of Psalmes. The chiefe exercise of the Saints in heaven is said to be giving of thankes, and singing praise unto God: why then should this exercise on earth seeme tedious to any man that hopes to see God as he is in the heaven, and beare a part in that celestiall Queere?

Moreover, besides ordinary prayer every day, perhaps sometimes it shall be found requisite for the Master of the family to call to extraordinary prayer, which is cómonly joyned with fasting. This may be done in a common or private calamity, or when some extraordinary blessing is requested, as *Nehem.* 1.4. *Acts* 10. 30. *Ester* 4. 16.

Now concerning this blessed service of prayer to be used daily in every family, me thinkes I should not neede to use

motives, considering that God doth so greatly delight in it, and the whole world is not worth this one prerogative of beleevers, that they may at all times and in all places make their requests knowne unto the Almighty, and aske any thing of him in the name of Christ, and have a promise to be heard.

If the Lord had commanded us every day with great cost to offer unto him sacrifices morning and evening, would we not doe it? How much more, when he saith unto us, onely, Aske and have.

The third part of holy service to be used in private families is wholesome Discipline. This must not exceede the bounds. A Master of a family may proceede neither to excommunication, nor execution of any of his family never so wicked. The course that Governours of severall houses may take, is this.

First, if their children or servants be unruly, they must tell them of their faults in the spirit of meeknesse.

they must rebuke them sharpelie.

Thirdly, if that will not prevaile, they must correct them.

Fourthly, if private admonition and correction will not bring them into order, the Master must require the aide of the publike Magistrate. As it is, *Deut. 21. 18. If a man have a stubborne and rebellious sonne, which will not obey the voyce of his father, or the voice of his mother, & that when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the Elders of his City, and they shall say unto the Elders of his City, This our sonne is stubborne and rebellious, he will not obey our voice;* he is a glutton and a drunkard: *And all the men of the City shall stone him with stones that he dye. So shalt thou put evill away from among you, and all Israell shall heare and feare.*

Thus it shou'd be. But alas! how hath foolish pitty thrust out wholesome houshold Discipline? Fathers and Mo-

thers are so farre from correcting and rebuking their unrulie children, that they are angry if any nieghbour speake unto them by way of admonition. Therfore have we just cause to feare lest the Lord deale with us as he did with old *Ely*, because he was too favourable to his lewd sonnes.

So also for evill servants, what Master now adayes will take any paines by wholesome admonition and due correction to bring them into order? Some Masters indeede behave themselves like lyons in their houses towards those that will not doe their worke according to their minde: but if they will follow their busines, they regard not how lewd and wicked they be otherwise. If they will not presently serve their turne, they will not labour to make them better, but turne them away: And so it comes to passe that they which are filthy, or lazie, or ignorant, remaine so still, and the Land swarmes with a generation of

deboshed servants; so that tis hard to finde a faithfull servant, and all for want of execution of wholesome Discipline in private families.

Thus much for the former duty concerning God.

The second concernes our selves.

For the better performing of this duty, note that there are three combinations or couplements in the family. First there are the husband and the wife. Secondly, Parents and children. Thirdly, Master and servants.

That a family may be well-ordered, it is requisite that these three couplements which stand in relation each to other, doe keepe their ranke.

The duty of the husband is that he dwell with his wife as a man of understanding, giving honour unto her as the weaker vessell, & loving her as his owne flesh, and be not bitter unto her.

The Wifes duty is to submit her selfe unto her husband, and to doe him good

and not evill all the dayes of her life.

The duty of Parents is to bring up their children in the knowledge of Gods will, and in some lawfull calling, wherein they may further the Common-weale.

The duty of Children is to obey their Parents.

The duty of Masters is to provide for their servants foode and raiment, and sufficient imployment: they must also take order that they may be instructed, and if neede be, corrected.

The duty of Servants is to honour their Masters, though they be but meane men, and to obey them with feare and trembling, not answering againe, but doing service to them in singlenesse of heart as unto Christ.

All these points are so plainly set downe in the holy Scriptures, that they neede not explanation but execution. And where any of these couplements keeps not their ranke, or neglects

forenamed duties, the family cannot be well ordered.

Wherefore as we love order, and reverence the *God* of order, let us set our selves from this day forward every one of us to keepe his owne order, that so every severall family being well ordered, the whole Common-wealth may come into good order, and consequently that God may be moved to remove from us his judgments of plague, famin and unseasonable weather, which our manifold disorders have brought upon us.

There is none of us but now and then cries out upon the disorder in the Land, and prayes for reformation: But assuredly in vaine doe we looke for publike reformation, unlesse we will every one reforme our owne families.

As long then as we live disorderly our selves, or keepe any disordered person in our houses, whether sonne or daughter, man-servant, or maid-servant,

yea or any kinſeman or ſtranger, we are enemies to our owne deſires, and which is more, adverſaries to the Commonweale.

Which imputation if we doe juſtly abhorre, then let us with all our might endeavour every one of us from the higheſt to the loweſt according to the holy commandement of the Lord of Lords, to ſet our houſes in order.

Deo Patri, Filio, et Spiritui ſancto ſit omnis laus, honor & gloria in æternum:

AMEN.

FINIS.